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Caste is an important and rigid determinant of division of labour. Under this system several occupations have been preserved as caste monopolies, while some are 'open' and may be adopted by persons belonging to all castes. This system of division of labour by occupation has been examined at some length in Chapter III.

The factors of sex, age and social status govern the division of labour in nearly all types of work in the community. First, 'masculine' and 'feminine' pursuits are clearly distinguished: a woman doing man's work is laughed at; a man undertaking any specifically feminine tasks provides a favourite theme for popular gossip. Household work, agricultural activities, traditional craft or occupation of the family, and socio-religious rites and ceremonies are all marked by division of work on the basis of sex.

The age factor is equally important, but not so rigid. Six basic age divisions are recognized in the society: (i) 'Infant' from birth to weaning. (ii) 'Child' from weaning to about twelve. (iii) 'Grown-up boys or girls' from twelve until marriage or even a year or two later. (iv) 'Grown-up people' from twenty to about thirty-eight. (v) Middle-aged from about thirty-eight to fifty. (vi) 'Aged', over fifty. Each of these age divisions carries with it a more or less recognized status which determines the nature and quantity of work to be done by the individual in question. Only in the lower strata of the community we find the 'child' burdened with a regular share in domestic and occupational tasks. The children in the families on upper levels may occasionally do odd bits of work, but no responsibility is thrust on them. As they grow up, girls have to take an increasing interest in domestic tasks. 'Grown-up boys and girls' must seriously start 'learning to do things', and are gradually entrusted with some responsibility. However, it is on the 'grown-up people' that the main responsibility of 'doing all the work' and running the affairs of the household rests. The 'middle-aged' people continue to do a part of the practical work; but their time is more occupied by planning, direction and supervision. Depending on their age and personality, the 'aged' continue to supervise and direct the work of the younger members. As they grow older they content themselves merely by giving suggestions and eventually retire from active work or its planning, and devote their time mostly to their grandchildren.

Considerations of general social status also determine the nature

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565 Consideration of general social status also determine the natur of work to be done by an individual. For example, a man of recognized social status will not draw water from a public well, where he could be seen doing so by others. Womenfolk from such households will not be seen collecting cow-dung from the streets, nor will they do any work in the fields.

With these preliminary observations we can proceed to describe at greater length the actual division of labour in the community.

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Activity	*Man's work*	*Woman's work*
(1) Domestic work (daily routine and maintenance of the house)	Occasional repairs to the house	Sweeping the house every day, and keeping its surroundings clean. Throwing away the rubbish. Sprinkling water in the courtyard and in front of the main entrance. Assisting husband in repairs to the house
	Cooking during the illness or menstrual impurity of the wife (when no other woman is available). Scrubbing the utensils during wife's serious illness	Fetching water from the well. Cooking. Serving food to menfolk and children. Scrubbing the utensils. Husking paddy. Grinding grains
	Occasionally washing his own clothes	Washing her own, as well as children's and husband's clothes
	Occasionally making beds	Making beds
	May look after children	Looking after children
	Chopping firewood and bringing it home	Collecting fuel in the nearby jungle
	Killing and cutting up goats and sheep	Preparation and storage of pickles, preserves and dried vegetables
	Marketing	Marketing, especially purchase of provisions
	Climbing trees for fruit	Collecting vegetables, picking gourds and okras from the backyard garden
	Erecting and repairing the cattle-shed	Feeding the cattle. Keeping the shed clean

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Activity	*Man's work*	*Woman's work*
(2) Agriculture	Cutting shrubs. Repairing bunds of the paddy fields. Digging earth	Helping men in disposal of shrubs and in repairing the bunds
	Ploughing	— — —
	Sowing	May help in sowing
	Weeding	Weeding
	Harvesting	Harvesting
	Carrying the crops home	Carrying the crops home
(3) Festivals and ceremonies	Decorating the house if necessary	Cleaning the house
	Arranging feasts. Distributing food at feasts. Cooking if necessary	Cooking for feasts
	Actual worship, making sacrifice and offering food	Making initial preparation for worship, sacrifice, offering of food, etc.
		Singing
(4) Birth, marriage and death	(i) Birth. Waiting outside for running errands	Attending to the expectant mother. Assisting at the time of actual delivery. Taking care of the newborn. Disposing of the after-birth. Care of the mother
	(ii) Marriage. Negotiations and settlement regarding marriage	Women consulted at all stages: final settlement generally with their approval
	Making provision of food and money	Making initial preparation for the ceremony. Buying cloth and ornaments
	Arrangements for feasts	Cooking and looking after 'internal' arrangements
		Singing
	(iii) Death. Carrying the corpse. Digging the grave or preparing the pyre	Preparing the corpse for cremation or burial. Wailing. Throwing away the earthen pots

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Activity	*Man's work*	*Woman's work*
(5) Village administration and politics	All village offices, as well as minor government offices held by men. Village council composed entirely of men	May appear before the village council only as witnesses
	Intrigue and factionalism	Generally instigate the menfolk indirectly. Quarrels among women often lead to complications in the inter-relations of men

In the above table no reference has been made to the division of labour between men and women in the practice of their caste occupations and crafts. In this sphere the role of the sexes has been defined by the traditions of the individual castes. Some typical examples will suffice. Among the Brahmins, only men perform priestly functions; women have no share in this task. Komti women may manage their shop at home, but they do not go round, as do their menfolk, setting up their shops at all the weekly markets in the neighbouring villages. Among the potters, both men and women can work at the wheel. Similarly, the caste traditions of the weavers permit both men and women to work together without making any sharp distinction between masculine and feminine spheres of activity. The same is true of the washerman's caste. Among the other occupational castes, however, the respective fields of men and women are well defined. Only men among the Golla take out their flocks and herds for grazing. Among the Gaondlas, again, only men go round the village collecting juice from the palm trees. Their womenfolk, however, assist them in fermenting it, storing it in the shop, and also in selling it. Hair-cutting and shaving are done only by males in the barber's caste. The traditional rules of the Panch Bramha group of village artisans enjoin that the principal roles in the occupations would be those of men, whilst women have only minor and secondary functions connected with them. Thus the smiths dealing in gold and silver, iron, and bell-metal, do not allow the women to work at the forge, for their caste tradition specifically lays down that this task should be done only by men. In another section belonging to the same group, the women are prohibited from handling the principal carpenter's tools. Lower down in the social scale, among

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the Erkalas, the men occupy themselves with hunting and trapping, while women weave mats and seek some additional income by fortune-telling. Among the Madigas males deal with dead animals; women come into the picture only when the meat has to be carried home and cooked. Both men and women may work at curing hides. Shoe-making and other leather-work is mainly done by men. On ritual and ceremonial occasions, musical instruments are played only by Madiga men.

Earlier it has been pointed out that men avoid tasks which are generally known as 'feminine'; and women in their turn are expected not to undertake pursuits which are traditionally regarded as 'masculine'. It is true that during the illness or absence of his wife, a man has to perform some of her domestic duties, but that is obviously a compromise with necessity. Any man taking undue interest in feminine tasks soon earns the unenviable epithet of 'half-woman', and is exposed to the ridicule of the community. Asking a man to do some feminine work would be almost tantamount to questioning his masculinity. 'Put bangles on your wrist, husk the paddy and cook the meals', is a remark often used in reproach to admonish those who lack manly qualities and courage. A woman going out of her way to do anything which is regarded as 'man's work' is noticed and adversely commented upon by the society. It is unthinkable that a woman can handle the plough. It should be pointed out here that sometimes a woman deliberately undertakes to do masculine work to 'bring home' to the husband the realization that he is not fulfilling his manly obligations and thus to awaken him to his proper responsibilities. Middle-aged women and widows can do some men's work without social censure.

Reference has been made to the six basic age divisions recognized in the community. Among the 'rich' and the 'well-to-do' families children do very little; but among the 'average' and the 'poor' they have to help the parents. Grazing the cattle, assisting parents in their work in the fields during the busy season, looking after younger siblings, and running errands are regarded as children's work. The girls have to help their mother in the kitchen. As they grow up their share in work gradually increases. Boys take more interest in 'outdoor' work, whilst girls are absorbed in the domestic routine. During this stage of life the 'grown-up boys and girls' even of rich and well-to-do families have to apply